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By *Alan Titchmarsh*

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PAGE 32

GYPSY CAMP CRACKDOWN

Government pledge
to end illegal 'Bank
Holiday land-grabs'

EXCLUSIVE

By Eugene Henderson

THE new Government last night warned troublemaking travellers and gypsies: "The good times are over."

After years of setting up illegal campsites by exploiting legal loopholes they have been told they have reached the end of the road - and that includes "Bank Holiday land-grabs".

Tough new legislation will create a criminal offence of intentional trespass. Travellers who refuse to move

TURN TO PAGE 4



**Becks'
tonic
for the
troops**

FULL STORY
AND MORE
PICTURES
PAGE 3

HEROES: Beckham with RAF girl Madeline Rowe in Afghanistan yesterday

Anger at BA union's
£100m playhouse

EXCLUSIVE

By James Murray

THE Unite union is locked in a battle with wealthy homeowners over plans to build an extension to its £100million country mansion.

The fresh row erupted as last-minute talks to avert strikes by British Airways cabin crew broke up after demonstrators stormed the building where the meeting was being held.

Top architects were hired to design an annexe with roof terrace and 36 bedrooms at Esher Place, the union's training and

TURN TO PAGE 7

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Police get the power to kick out travellers

FROM PAGE ONE

could be arrested by police or forcibly evicted. It is understood the new approach will not face opposition from the Tories' coalition partners, the Lib Dems.

Travellers will be labelled "trespassers" if they set up home on other people's land.

Those who actually buy plots of land, often in Green Belt country, then begin building work before applying for retrospective planning permission will find that loophole closed.

Typically, travellers moved on to the sites late on Fridays when councils were closed for a Bank Holiday weekend.

They started building the next day, then applied for retrospective planning permission. If they failed to secure it, they often claimed their human rights as travellers were being infringed.

The Tories say Labour's former Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott's softly softly approach gave some gypsies the "green light" to trespass and illegally develop sites.

The changes will be warmly greeted by people across Britain.

The latest battleground has been in Meriden, Warwickshire, where quick-thinking locals formed a human blockade to prevent travellers dumping 18,000 tons of hardcore after they moved

in over the May Day Bank Holiday. Last Friday, the protesters won a High Court injunction to stop the travellers building on land they own in the village.

The travellers, who began work without planning permission, will still have their planning application considered by Solihull Council.

At Cottenham in Cambridgeshire, the council has been seeking to remove an illegal settlement of some 800 travellers who have occupied 20 acres since 2003.

Close to Chobham in Surrey, 100 travellers are staying put pending a planning inquiry. It is the same story at North Cerney in Gloucestershire, Bredon Hill in Worcestershire, North Moreton in Oxfordshire, and at Crays Hill in Essex, where a warehouse has been built and near Pangbourne, Berkshire.

In one village in the heart of Jane Austen country in Ropley, Hampshire, locals raised more than £200,000 to buy back a 13-acre field that travellers had bought for £150,000 from a retiring farmer last October.

To date the travellers' activities have been only a civil offence, forcing landowners to have to pursue them through the courts.

The new legislation will change all that and aims to curtail the ability to apply for retrospective planning permission. Under a

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65	£25K	£37.5K	£50K	£62.5K	£75K	£87.5K
70	£30K	£45K	£60K	£75K	£90K	£105K
75	£35K	£52.5K	£70K	£87.5K	£105K	£122.5K
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secret Labour directive regional planning officers had been told to favour allowing travellers to establish rural sites in direct contradiction of planning rules, even on Green Belt land where no one else can build.

The Department of Communities' guidelines said the human rights of travellers took precedence over upset residents. Last night a Tory Party insider said: "Travellers beware, all bets are off. We're not saying they can't own land, they just can't build on it as and when they like."

Last night Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, said: "The last government's policies have undermined community relations and increased tensions.

"We will work to tackle the legitimate sense of injustice."